Facilities for pilgrims to the Sabarimala Temple.

183. *MR. S. NILAKANTA PILLAI: Will the Government be pleased to state:

(*a*) whether they are aware that many of the pilgrims are put to severe sufferings on their way through the mountains to Sabarimala and at Sabarimala for want of proper accommodation, good drinking water and sanitary arrangements; and

(*b*) the steps taken hitherto in the matter of providing accommodation etc.?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI: (*a*) The journey is undertaken as a pilgrimage and the route is through Reserve Forest and there are inconveniences incidental thereto.

(*b*) (i) *Accommodation.* Five acres of land were cleared at each of the *thavalams* at Azhutha, Pampa and Sabarimala in 1111 and 1112. Gas lights were also provided throughout the night for protection. The space available inside the trenches at Sabarimala was converted into platforms for the convenient accommodation of pilgrims. In addition to this a set of 20 temporary rooms was constructed at the cost of the Department and rented out for occupation.

(ii) *Drinking water.* Good drinking water was taken to Sabarimala through pipes from Kumbalam *thodu* through a distance of 4 furlongs. The system worked satisfactorily during the current year.

(iii) *Sanitary arrangements.* Temporary privies and latrines were provided at Kalaketti, Azhutha and Karimala on the Erumeli route on the 26th, 27th and 28th Dhanu respectively for the forward march of the pilgrims going to Sabarimala and at Kollamuzhi, Elavumkal and Thalaparakotta on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Makaram on the Rajampara route by which the pilgrims returned. Arrangements were also made for cleaning the privies then and there.

In addition to this the way leading to and from the Azhutha river in the Erumeli route and the Karumkayam river in the Rajampara route was widened near the river bank in 1111 to give easy access to and from the river bed. A wire rope was also put up across the river to serve as a support for pilgrims in crossing the river.

MR. S. NILAKANTA PILLAI: Sir, from the answer to part (*a*) am I to understand that because the journey is undertaken as a pilgrimage there is no duty on the part of the Government to look to the conveniences of the pilgrims?

RAO BAHADUR RAJYASEVANIRATA DR. N. KUNJAN PILLAI: It does not mean that, Sir. Government are providing whatever conveniences could be provided and steps are being taken for providing more conveniences also.

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